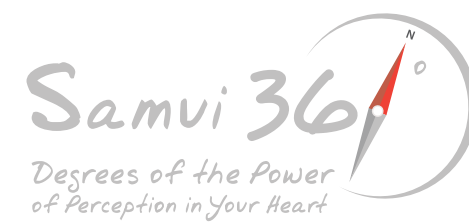


# English

## Samui 360°



*Degrees of the Power  
of Perception in Your Heart*



**Message**  
**Governor, Surat Thani Province**



Surat Thani Province is situated on the coast of the Gulf of Thailand, on the upper part of southern Thailand. It has the largest province in the South, covering the moist evergreen forest rich with diversity in plants and wild life. There are numerous natural attractions that retain their pristine state, as famous islands, clear and clean seawater, white sandy beaches, for instance, Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan, Ko Tao, Ko Nang Yuan and Ang Thong Islands, each with its different natural features.

The diverse topographical characters, from islands of different sizes in the Gulf of Thailand, mountains, plateaus, coastal flatland, and river basin flatland, are fascinations that attract a large number of tourists each year. Moreover, Surat Thani is completely equipped with all types of facilities, convenient communication, by car, train, and boat, and is the location of two airports which help enhance the province's potentials in accommodating tourists. Today, Surat Thani has become the tourism centre on the Gulf of Thailand's coast.

With the province's potentials, and cooperation through the joining of forces by all sides in the province, both in the public and private sectors, we are today ready to welcome everyone on a visit to Surat Thani, the city of hundred islands, delicious rambutan, large oyster, red egg and centre of Dhamma, with smiles and happiness.

**Mr.Chatpong Chatraphuti**  
**Governor of Surat Thani Province**

**Message**  
**Chief Executive of the Provincial**  
**Administrative Organization**  
**of Suratthani**



Koh Samui Tourism Promotion Association has played an active role in the marketing and promoting the overall picture of tourism of Ko Samui, making the island famous and ranking high among top destinations of the world for a long time. This is done through the emphasizing on natural beauty and lush environment, as evidenced from various works carried out continuously to push the economy of Surat Thani towards prosperity and fast progress. I would like to give encouragement and pledge full cooperation in activities of the Koh Samui Tourism Promotion Association, so as to bring progress and prosperity to develop the economy of the province and the Thai nation towards sustainability in time to come.

In my capacity as the President of Surat Thani Provincial Administrative Organization, I would like to extend my best wishes to board members of the Koh Samui Tourism Promotion Association who put in their joint efforts in expanding the market of their tourism businesses to the global level at ITB BERLIN 2013 in Berlin, Germany, and would like to wish all members, officials, and those participating in the promotion of activities of the Koh Samui Tourism Promotion Association, Surat Thani Province happiness and prosperity!

With Best Wishes

**Mr.Thanongsak Thaweethong**  
**Chief Executive of the Provincial**  
**Administrative Organization**  
**of Suratthani**



**Message**  
**The Mayor of Koh Samui**



As time passes by, more and more visitors have been coming to Koh Samui for their holiday; that makes Koh Samui becomes one of the most popular destinations for travellers who seek a charming island with friendly people. Unsurprisingly, there are many changes in Koh Samui. Before, it all started from simple bungalows on the beach and local restaurants. Now, we have plenty of hotels, resorts and restaurants for you to choose, from simple bungalows to 5 star world-class resorts and from local restaurants to restaurants where serve gorgeous gourmet comparable to dishes served in the Michelin star restaurants. However, there are still many areas on the island still stay green and remain its natural beauty and one thing that has never changed is our “warm welcome smile” and a welcome greeting with the word “Sawasdee”.

Honestly, we do not have any trick. Our warm smile just jumps out from our happy heart. Samui people are happy people... Why? We have happy life for a long, long time...we have a beautiful island with beautiful nature and culture. The sun always greets us everyday. What else can we ask for?

Koh Samui has fascinating neighboring islands, namely, Koh Pa Ngan, Koh Tao and Koh Nang Yuan, Koh Ang Thong (a marine natural park) and etc. Koh Pa Ngan is easy to reach by speed-boat with only 20 minutes away and very famous for “Fullmoon party”. After Koh Pa Ngan you can visit Koh Tao and Koh Nang Yuan to discover the nature ambience, view the fascinating corals and explore more of the underwater world. A paradise is just minutes away more than you can ever imagine! To keep up with the world, Koh Samui is gearing toward to be a truly green island. Therefore, I am asking you to help us make Koh Samui clean and green so that you can enjoy the beauty of this island for a long, long time.

Welcome to our happy island, Koh Samui. Sawasdee krub.  
See you soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rammanet Chaikwang'.

**Mr.Rammanet Chaikwang**  
**The Mayor of Koh Samui**

**Message**  
**President of Tourism**  
**Association of Koh Samui**



These days, we are living in a world that turns faster each day. We can now travel overnight from one place to another remote place, a feast achieved by a traveler before our time in the matter of years. I am fortunate to have been born on such a beautiful place like Koh Samui. All my life I have met only those who want to visit this place. I have witnessed the travels from the former days which were arduous and very slow, up to these days, when in a wink, you take yourself from Bangkok to be among the blue sea, white sandy beach, and lush green mountains lined with coconut groves of Koh Samui already.

The fastness and convenience in travels contribute to the development of Samui as a major destination in Thailand. There have been changes in both lifestyle and the environment. Nevertheless Koh Samui remains the island of happiness for visitors, the happiness that could vary according to period and time of the day, and what each one is in search of or discovers.

Koh Samui Tourism Promotion Association is aware of the importance of conserving our treasures, that is to operate tour businesses that are favorable to the conservation of nature and the environment, with peaceful and happy communities, to make Koh Samui a tour destination that succeeds both in worth and in value, and to push for Koh Samui to be a destination to which tourists want to make return visits again and again.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tanongsak Somwong'.

**Mr.Tanongsak Somwong**  
**President of Tourism Association**  
**of Koh Samui**





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Today, Ko Samui is a once-in-a-lifetime destination for tourists around the world. With white and soft sandy beaches trimmed with lines of coconut trees, this big island in the eastern coast of the Gulf of Thailand has inspired tourists to come back times after times. It provides an ideal site to watch the sun rising from the horizon and setting down to the middle of the ocean. This is the place where visitors will leave the world behind and indulge in swimming in a blue ocean, or playing some kinds of water sports, or sitting behind the wheel in a Safari-style adventure on a mountain top which offers an atmosphere similar to that of the northern hilly terrain. Samui offers a wide variety of tasty food ranging from traditional to seafood and healthy dishes served with fine wine in a luxurious and classic atmosphere. 5-star hotels are growing in number, so are accommodations of other grades including native bungalows.

When in Samui, try unforgettable relaxing experiences by pampering yourself with natural spas or traveling to see ways of life of people in different occupations, or shopping on walking streets, or visiting a zoo watching stunning shows of animals. Samui is, indeed, a heaven sought after by tourists around the world.

However, Samui is not the only charming tourist attraction in this region. Only 30 minutes away by speedboat stands another big island named Pha-ngan.

Pha-ngan may have been known to most people because of its world famous full-moon party. Few people know Pha-ngan has several wonderful beaches, possesses Khao Ra peak on the highest mountain in the Gulf of Thailand, plenty of flora, fantastic view points, and community life waiting to be visited. More importantly, Pha-ngan has original lush nature waiting for everybody to fully enjoy.

The Ang Thong Marine National Park forms one of the most beautiful archipelagos of Thailand. It is rich in plants and wild animals both on land and deep down under the sea. Ko Tao and Ko Nang Yuan north of the archipelago are recognized diving spots and possess beautiful nature second to nowhere.







Farther away are two more national parks Khao Sok and Klong Phanom, located in Ban Ta Khun and Klong Phanom districts respectively, in Surat Thani Province. They both form the most fertile virgin forest in the South of Thailand and are habitats of rare plants and animals specific to this region. They offer many choices of adventurous activities such as forest trekking, kayaking, tubing, or sightseeing boat trips in the impressive Ratchaprapha Dam where water is emerald green and limestone mountains lie intricately in foggy mornings, making it to be called Thailand's Chinese Guilin. As for accommodations, there are a wide range of floating houses in the dam to choose from.

Chaiya is famous as a dhamma district because of Suan Mokkh established by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu where his Than Nam Lai Monastery is situated. As a Buddhist philosopher of the century, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has been honored by UNESCO as one of the world's great personalities. The monastery is today not only the place of worship and merit-making but also the center for the younger generation to pay homage to the revered monk and to study the path he has laid for them to follow in order to achieve a peaceful and happy life. The monk has established a Theatre of Spirits and a meditation center for Thais and foreigners to learn the Buddhist philosophy with the help of experienced teacher monks. The district of Chaiya also contains archaeological sites and used to be the dissemination center of Buddhism in the old days. For tourists, the city has a lot of things to write home about.



Just next to this central town, crossing the Tapi River, is a large green basin crisscrossed with over a hundred of canals and inhabited by people earning their living on fruit orchards, mainly coconut, and handicraft products. Life along these canals is fresh and enchanting, not to mention little fireflies which flash in the dark like diamonds under the trees along the canal.

A little further away is the estuary of Tha Thong River, belonging to Kanchanadit district. Coastal land in this area is devoted to farming of high-quality oyster and mussel. The area serves as a learning center in coastal fisheries and fishing village life. Farm-stays over coastal sea have been organized to provide alternative accommodations for tourists who want a worthwhile and unique experience.



Samui 361° is providing a new dimension of tourist attractions on Samui and surrounding areas, in terms of both majestic nature and interesting ways of life of people. What is special in Samui 361° is that the 361st degree exists in the heart of all those who are tirelessly eager to find a story or to explore things in a different perspective. The perspective provided in this book, therefore, represents a comprehensive look into the stories that form the shape of Samui and its surrounding attractions in the 360-degree range while the 361st degree in your heart will bring you to appreciate the value of new places, new perspectives, new stories and new experiences that will be with you forever.

# Samui: the Destination of Everlasting Impression





## Inclining Coconut Trees and Na Thian Beach: the Living Memory of Yesterday



*Best Time* April to June  
*Best Period* At sunrise and during 10.00–14.00 hrs.  
*Travel Info* From Ban Hua Thanon, follow Highway No.4169 up to Highway No. 4170 Intersection. A side road on the left leads to Na Thian Beach around Samui Orchid Resort

One of the ever-recognizable symbols of Ko Samui is the coconut tree. Coconuts, planted across the island, are the main export products of the locals; nevertheless, the ones that most visitors remember are those by the seaside leaning toward the direction of the sun. Most of the inclining coconut trees have perished and there is now only one left in Samui. This tree is at the most beautiful spot on the beach of Haad Na Thian, withstanding the time to prove us the once ravishing sight of old years.







## Haad Chaweng and Haad Choeng Mon: Dreamlike White Sand and Blue Sky



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>June to September</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>At sunrise and during 10.00–14.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon. Follow Highway No. 4169 passing Mae Nam Beach, Bo Phut Beach up to Chaweng Beach, a distance of 23 kilometres</i>



Beaches in Samui are dreams come true for people whose holiday keywords are “sand”, “breeze”, “sunshine”, “warm sea” and “blue sky”. Luckily, that is most of us! That is why Samui has become known as one of the world’s destinations. Haad Chaweng and Haad Choeng Mon are the two most remarkable connecting beaches on the east of Samui. Everyday the late-morning sun shines on the water and changes its colour to emerald green. The beaches look out over the symbolic Ko Mut Lang and Ko Fan Noi which extraordinarily bring to completeness the sublime view.



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>January to April</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>Late afternoon at sunset</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169, passing Mae Nam Beach, Bo Phut Beach up to Chaweng Beach, a distance of 22 kilometres</i>

The verdant primary forest traversed by emerald green current that forms tiny cascades flowing down to well-shaded large and small natural pools .The image fits the imaginative Himavanta forest in the mythology. Yet in reality, a valley in the heart of Ao Luek District boasts one such imaginative heavenly forest in Than Bokkhorani National Park, a well known tourist attraction of Krabi Province. The Than Bokkhorani Pond never runs dry and retains its captivating charms for visitors' relaxation. And as long as the water keeps cascading down to the eternal pools, this site remains the heavenly pond of the mythological Himavanta Forest forever.

Haad Thong Yang:  
Breathtaking Sunset  
on Golden Sand Beach



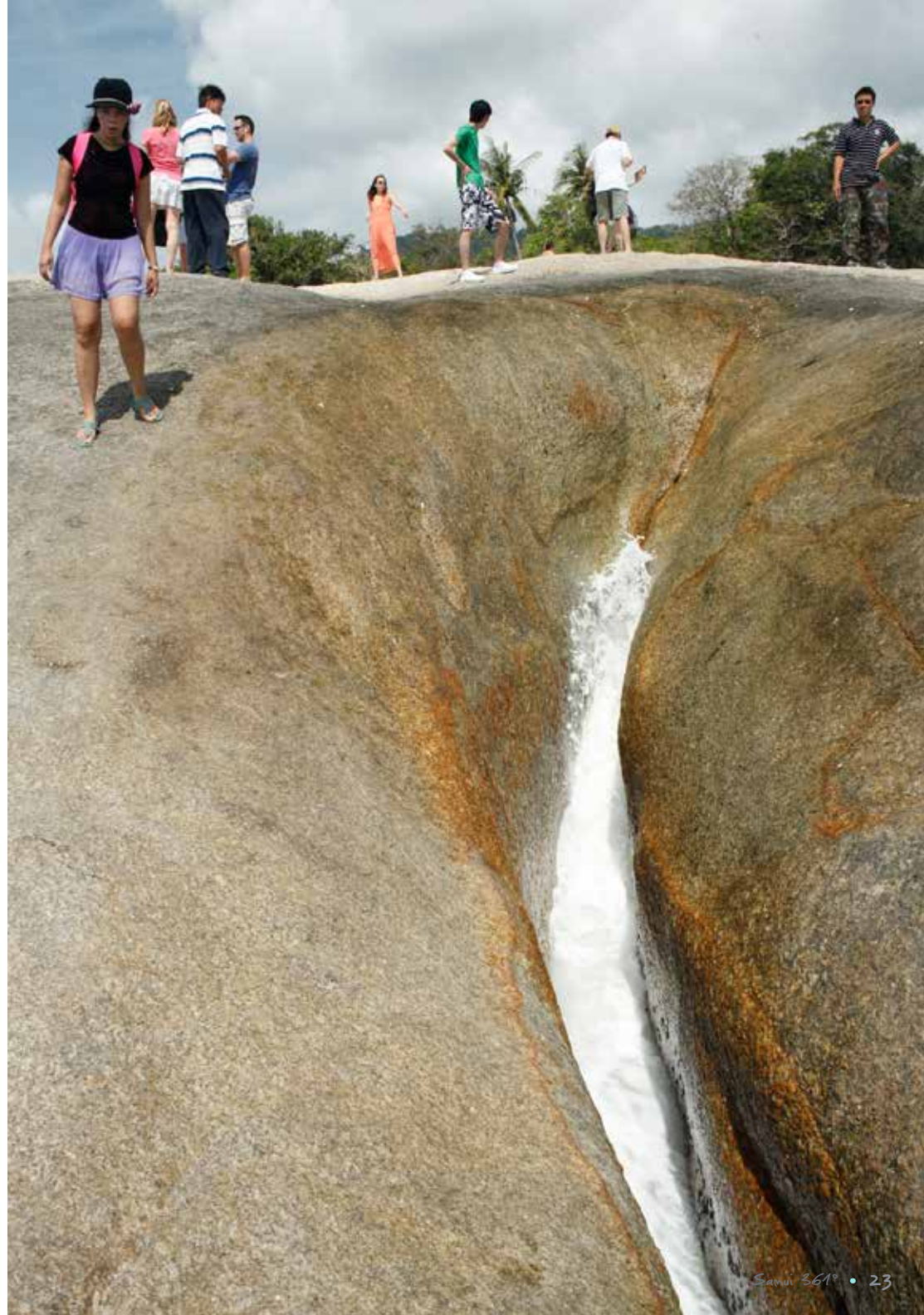


## Hin Ta Hin Yai (Grandfather and Grandmother Rocks): One of a Kind Wonder



*Best Time* May to September  
*Best Period* 10.00–14.00 hrs.  
*Travel Info* From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169,  
passing Ban Hua Thanon, up to Hin Ta Hin Yai,  
a distance of 18 kilometres

It is a wonder itself that human eyes and brain can work together and make us perceive things in amusing way. This is probably the most likely case. This couple of tremendous rocks were fashioned by pure trick of nature. One appears similar to a male genital, while the other has a gap that looks like a female counterpart. They are sat on a congested vicinity of rocks by the seaside of Haad Lamai quite a sight!







## Ko Mut Sum: the Port of Call for Beach Paradise



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>May to September</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>During 10.00–14.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Krut Beach, hire the local Hua Thong boat at the beach for a trip of about 50 minutes</i>

If you have been to Samui for many times that you feel you have run out of places to explore, try take a short trip to this small island, located 30 minutes by long-tailed boat from Haad Thong Krut beach to the south of Samui. From a distance, the islet disguises itself as a typical-looking long-shape land. Nonetheless, it was grown out of an ancient coral reef, thus has a pure white sand beach similar to those in Andaman Sea. The secret beautiful spot is on the north-west side of the islet on which a sharp cape was located stretching into the sea. Its white sand beach hugging clear seawater always charms the visitors to believe that they are in fact in Maldives paradise.



## Mountain Safari: A New Way to Enjoy Samui



*Best Time* January to April and July to August  
*Best Period* 9.00–12.00 hrs.  
*Travel Info* You can start from Mae Nam Beach, Lamai Beach, or Na Thon Beach, as they are all linked up.

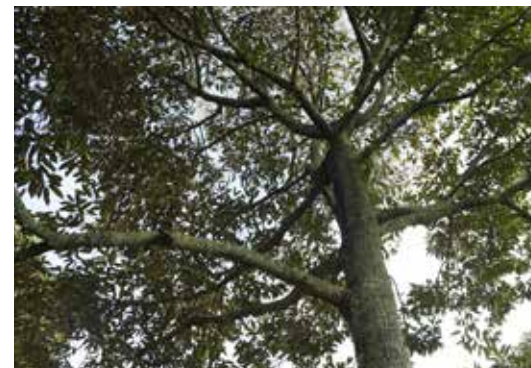
At the heart of Samui is a tall mountainous range that connects the north and the south of the island, which has sustained coconut plantations and fruit gardens since old time. Today, the road cutting project across the mountains has encouraged a new trend of tourism. With new roads, four-wheeled cars can access the mountains from Haad Mae Nam, Haad Lamai and Haad Na Thon. Believe it or not ? With average height of only 600 metres, the weather on the mountains is as cool as that in Chiang Mai and the northern region of Thailand. Better is that you also get panoramic sea views and there are many lovely scenery spots! In the morning and the evening, and even at noon time in rainy season, you might find yourself drawn in the sea of mist.







## Ban Lipa Noi: A Fruit Garden of Eden on Samui



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>Durian ripens from September to October, rambutan, mangosteen, langsung are available from December to March</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>All day long, but most activities are seen in the morning</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169 up to Ban Lipa Noi, a distance of about 2 kilometres</i>

While on the east of Samui has become a completely touristic area, with facilities and resorts mushrooming along the shoreline to accommodate overwhelming number of visitors, the west of the island still sees forest and fruit gardens that bear coconuts, rambutans, mangosteens, durians and langsung. The fertile area welcomes eco-tourism, especially during rainy season when the trees fruit enormously. Visitors can buy produces at reasonable prices and experience lifestyle of local farmers.



## Ban Taling Ngam : Lifestyle at Peace by Coconut Trees



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>Throughout the year</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>Morning 8.00–10.00 hrs. afternoon 15.00–17.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon., follow Highway No.4169 and turn into Highway No.4170, up to Ban Taling Ngam, a distance of about 10 kilometres</i>

The traditional lifestyle of Samui people evolve around the coconut farming, which was once their main income generator before tourism approached the island. Nonetheless, the lifestyle of coconut farmers has still been observed on the west coast, for instance at Baan Taling Ngam village. People still use monkeys to collect coconuts, still builds houses in classic Samui architectural style. Traditions that the locals help safeguarding are indeed the real beauty of this island.







<i>Best Time</i>	<i>Throughout the year</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>Morning 8.00–10.00 hrs.</i> <i>afternoon 14.00–17.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169 to Ban Hua Thanon, a distance of about 16 kilometres</i>

Samui islander's life has always evolved around two activities: coconut tree farming and fishing. Ban Hua Thanon is a Muslim fishing town that still maintains traditional unfaltering fisherman culture. Every evening, fishing boats will line up to go out to the sea just enough for day by day and using methods that do not disturb the ecosystem. A quiet night in the sea and years of fishing experience offer them food to their dining tables and incomes from selling fish in markets in and outside the village. Grilled fish pierced with coconut-palm leaf stalks sending out delicious smell; old people mending fishnets in the middle of coconut tree farm; grandmothers grating coconuts for the sweet milk. These images, of which we rarely see in our urbanised, modernised lives, makes a visit to this village an unearthing of island's time capsule.

## Fishing Village Ban Hua Thanon: a Definition of "Time Flies"





<i>Best Time</i>	<i>Throughout the year, the Mae Nam Walking Street takes place every Thursday, while the Bo Phut Walking Street is held every Friday</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>19.00–21.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169 to Ban Mae Nam, a distance of 13 kilometres, and to Ban Bo Phut, 16 kilometres</i>

Walking streets are popularly widely known as places where you can find goods and fashions that are considered classic or vintage. They are also a good source of incomes for the locals who are proud and want to share their cultures to foreign visitors. There are countless number of walking streets in Samui. The most vibrant ones are those in Ban Mae Nam, an old fishing village, which opens every Thursday, and Ban Bo Phut, the nearby village, which opens every Friday.

## Ban Mae Nam and Ban Bo Phut Communities: Vintage Walking Streets







## Na Thon Old Town: Unchanged Samui Way of Living



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>Throughout the year, while the Na Thon Walking Street takes place every Saturday</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>17.00–21.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Na Thon, use the central road to find interesting old houses all around, the Walking Street is also held on this central road</i>

Yet another deeply rooted community in Samui is Ban Na Thon village, which has become a ferry port between Don Sak district and Ko Samui. Although there are modern businesses taking turns to open stores on available spaces, in the main street of the village still remains unchanged with wooden shophouses occupied by Chinese descendants. Some are restaurants, coffee shops, souvenir shops, salons, houses of Chinese herbal medicine, candy shops, convenience stores and some continue to be residences. These images reflect conventional way of life in Chinese community who have traded in the area and brought about economic development to Na Thon village.



*Best Time* May to September for Lamai Beach, and December to April for Thong Khrut Beach

*Best Period* 17.00–19.00 hrs.

*Travel Info* From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169, passing Ban Hua Thanon, up to Lamai Beach, a distance of 20 kilometres, turning into Highway No.4170 to Thong Khrut Beach, 15 kilometres

No doubt, the west of the island is full of beaches with evening spots from Haad Na Thon, Haad Thong Yang to Haad Taling Ngam. But who would expect that beaches on the east, such as Haad Lamai, and on the south, such as Haad Thong Krut, can give unmatched sunset views. On Haad Lamai, the best spot is on the south of the Grandfather and Grandmother Rocks (Hin Ta Hin Yai). It overlooks round-shaped reefs scattering into the sea. On Haad Thong Krut, the best place is where you can look at the sun through the long-standing inclining coconut tree the sight of sweet memory when the island was crowded with coconut trees.

The Finest Sunset  
on Haad Lamai  
and Haad Thong Krut





## Twilight on Lamai Beach: Gazing at the World from a Secret Corner



*Best Time* May to September  
*Best Period* 18.30–19.00 hrs.  
*Travel Info* From Na Thon, follow Highway No. 4169,  
passing Ban Hua Thanon, to Lamai Beach,  
20 kilometres

Haad Lamai, as well as Haad Chaweng and Haad Choeng Mon, has been well-celebrated as one of the most beautiful beaches on the island. Apart from the notorious Grandfather and Grandmother Rocks (Hin Ta Hin Yai), its pride is the extended white sand beach that reaches out to the north and connects to Haad Chaweng. The best view spot is when standing near Hin Ta Hin Yai and looking to the north over Haad Chaweng. This is a popular postcard-quality scenery, however, not many people realise that this view at a quiet nightfall with lights from the distant beach can give you more than you would imagine of a special moment.



## Green Hotels : Lodgings for Eco-conscious Travelers

The tourism situation in Ko Samui today is different from that in the past 20 years owing to the growing number of tourists. With the rapid and continual increase of tourists each year, hotels, spas, restaurants and tour agencies have emerged all over the place in response to the demand. Such a growth means depletion of natural resources, sending, more or less, impacts to the environment. A group of eco-conscious people in Samui has therefore launched a campaign to raise public awareness on how to use natural resources on the island sustainably with maximum benefits. The concept of 'Green Hotels' therefore emerges out of many people's conscience that there is an urgent need to address the situation before the wave of tourism lashes the island so violently that no defense can be made.

Waste water treatment constitutes a priority step in the campaign. It calls for an action to prohibit waste water from being released into the sea unless it is properly treated. Another concept is to bring back the treated waste water for use in gardening. Garbage disposal is considered a problem of equal importance to waste water because of the large volume of garbage usually released from



different sections of a hotel. The campaign also strongly suggests the use of microbes replacing chemicals being used in agricultural activities in order to reduce the rate of contamination when these chemicals are poured into the sea. This group of people also calls for a reduction in the use of energy in everyday life, for instance, turning off air-conditioners when nobody is in the room, turning off some lights that do not affect the work, and reducing the use of plastic bags by carrying cotton bags. It also calls on big hotels to use the heat generated from air-conditioners to fuel their boiling system, the way which also cuts their spending on electricity.

Furthermore, a campaign has been launched to grow native plants which consume less water while encouraging planting of more coconut trees. Hotels are encouraged to raise earthworms by feeding them with vegetables left over from their kitchen and to spread the worms over the soil in order to improve its condition. They are also asked to feed birds and butterflies with fruits and juice discarded in the dining room.

Many hotels have been cooperative to the campaign by growing organic vegetables to promote the health of their customers. Some are educating children in the schools located in their vicinity about environmental conservation. They take the children to their demonstration farms of organic vegetables and even teach them to make effective micro-organism (EM) balls to sanitize the water. Some hotels deduct one dollar from each room's rate and donate it to a fund to promote environmental awareness campaign among children.







As a reward to such a hard work and vision in developing both the quality of the environment and the tourism industry at the same time, the Green Leaf Foundation, under the auspices of the Board of Environmental Promotion of Tourism Activities, has conferred them with the “Green Leaf Certificates”. The foundation will each year list the hotels for the award, taking into account their respective abilities in environmental management. A Green Leaf Certificate is given in the same way as the number of stars that hotels have earned for their quality of service. The Green Leaf Certificate is therefore a spiritual encouragement for hotels to do more to protect the environment so that, in the end, the natural beauty of Samui will be maintained sustainably and will stay with us forever.

#### List of hotels in Samui which have been awarded Green Leaf Certificates

1. Baan Taling Ngam Resort & Spa
2. Banburee Resort & Spa
3. Bandara Resort & Spa
4. Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui
5. Centara Villas Samui
6. Dhevatarra Resident
7. Fairhouse Villas & Spa
8. First Bungalow Beach Resort
9. Kamalaya Koh Samui
10. Mai Samui Beach Resort & Spa
11. New Star Beach Resort
12. Nora Beach Resort & Spa
13. Paradise Beach Resort
14. Shasa Hotel Casavela Ko Samui
15. The Passage Samui Villas & Resort
16. The Tongsa Bay

#### Hotels with interesting environmental projects and tentative to be awarded

1. Baan Hin Sai Resort
2. Coral Bay Resort & Spa
3. Rocky Boutique Resort
4. Santiburi Resort
5. Tamarine Springs
6. The Imperial Samui Resort

## Samui Green Spa : World of Natural Balance

Samui has claimed to be the land of natural spas citing hundreds of such sites on the island, providing different spa therapies well-known to domestic and international tourists. Samui has many good spas under ‘natural’ atmosphere, each having its own attractive point. Among over a hundred spas in Samui, only nine spas have been awarded “Green Leave Certificate”.

Tamarind Spring provides natural spa and has maintained the most natural aspects in its service through proportionate arrangement of rocks, caves and the greenery. Situated in a hidden mountain creek with lush tropical surroundings, Tamarind Spring gives relaxing atmosphere, provides steam-bath in a cave as well as massages in a pavilion on a hill slope by professional masseuses.

Baan Taling Ngam Resort & Spa, located on the unspoilt west coast of Samui, provides exquisite massage service using the most comprehensive technique to give relaxation to travelers. It is one of the most eco-friendly natural spa therapies.



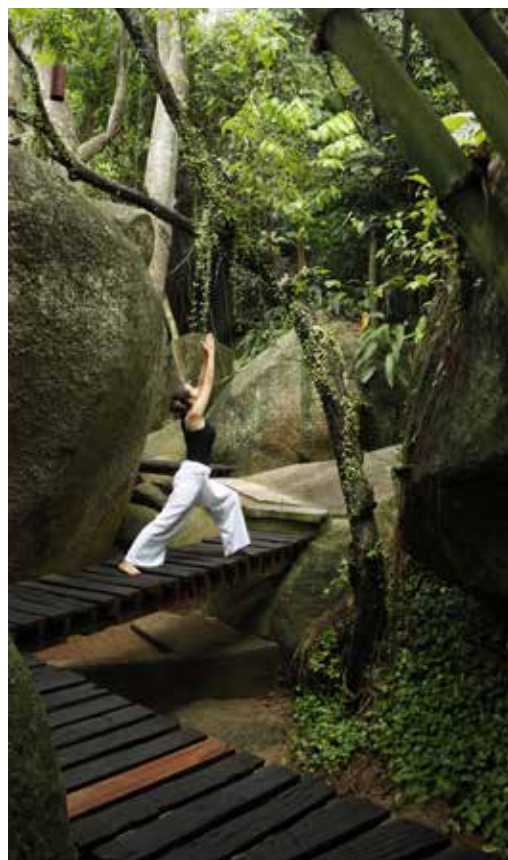


The Tongsai Bay houses the Prana Spa in its shady green zone that visitors can feel great relaxation once stepping into the area. Massage treatment is provided on hilly terrains with a wide variety of impressive service to choose from.

Natural Wing Health Spa & Resort is on the northwestern part of the island and is outstanding from others in that it makes use of natural products in both massage and treatment process including evaporated scented oil and fresh coconut. It also offers many spa products for sale.

Muang Samui Spa Resort, located north of Chaweng beach, boasts its Rai Ra spa, famous for natural balance massage, body scrubbing with honey and sesame seed oil and facial massage using natural minerals.

Silarom Spa is located in Baan Hin Sai Resort. It provides natural spas constructed in the rock outcrop. Guests receive their spa treatment in an open pavilion on top of a cliff with the full view of ocean and the sky, thus selected as one in 5 most beautiful spa locations



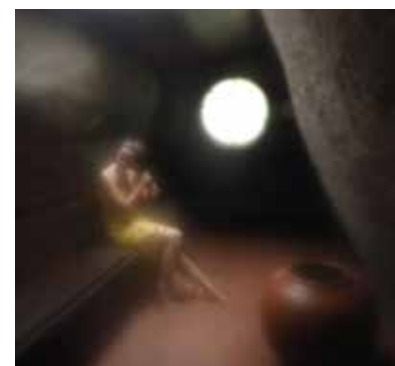
of Thailand. It is famous for an authentic royal court massage.

Eranda Herbal Spa is the only day-spa provider that is awarded Green Leaf Certificate. It is laid out on a beautiful hill side in the north of Chaweng beach overlooking lush tropical gardens. Its spa facilities spread throughout spa grounds on nine levels, and provide choices of treatment ranging from traditional massage to the famous heated-rock technique.

Spa Cenvaree is located on one of the most beautiful spot of Samui, on Choeng Mon beach. Situated in the Six Senses Samui Hotel, it provides a 360-degree view of the sea. The centre is bringing together the very best aspects of ancient Thai therapies and treatments with cutting edge developments in international spa practice and the Harmonic Sense Therapy to give premium spa experience to travelers.

Santiburi Resort is in the midst of green gardens overlooking Mae Nam Beach. Inside its compound is an eco-friendly spa that uses a wide range of herbs and coconut products of the island, as main ingredients of therapies and treatment.

Besides, Ko Samui has many more recommended spas like Kamalaya Koh Samui, which has won several awards, offering wide-ranging styles of treatment science and relaxation, including acupuncture. Another place worth to be mentioned is the Banyan Tree Spa of the Banyan Tree Hotel with its unique rainforest treatment as well as Rain Shower and Vitality Pool.





## Delicious Food around Samui



Ko Samui is known for its fertility and diversified food. Native dishes are served in a number of restaurants. The most recognized restaurants are : Sabiang Lae on Lamai Beach Its identity dishes are Lub mushroom curry with sea anemone in chilli sauce and black pepper

Bangkham Seafood on Bang Kham Beach The most worth-a-try dishes are Mung-mang chill sauce made from Talingpling, giving a combination of sour, sweet and chilli hot tastes, spicy salads of Hoi Joh or small oysters, roasted Ra fish in coconut milk and Sai fish in hot chilli soup.

Honey Seafood on Choeng Mon beach Using fresh raw materials from owner's own catch. Not-to-miss dishes are fried octopus and boiled squid with Mung-mang.

Ranong Pochana on Lamai Beach Its signature dishes are frog curry with Chamuang leaves and boiled squid in coconut milk with tamarind leaves. Panong on Bo Phut Beach – Try fried noodle and chef's formula omelet.

Jitr Pochana at Talat (market) Na Thon – Opens 24-hrs and needs no doors. Most favorite menu is sour-peppery soup with Mayong fish eggs, followed by 3-layer pork in coconut boiled with salted fish.

Pui Yok – an original restaurant at Talat Na Thon. It is the only shop you can find the Chinese fried rice with red and crispy pork. An integral dish to this meal can be made by calling at the Ko Chui's, where chicken oily rice is available.

Another famous dish of Ko Samui is seafood which is available everywhere, but is recommended at two restaurants. The first one is “Starfish and Coffee” located in the Fisherman Village on Bo Phut Beach. It has impressive atmosphere and fresh and tasty food. However, reservations are necessary as it is busy every night. The other restaurant–Tharua Samui Seafood – has been opened recently but is one of the places with best atmosphere. Its seafood is fresh and excellent in taste. It is located in Tambon Maret. Travelers with plans to go there are advised to go before it's dark in order to catch up the atmosphere.

As for healthy food lovers, there are two restaurants to be recommended. Prana Resort & Spa is for vegetarians, using organic vegetables grown in the restaurant. Its special dish is the serving of raw food, which is actually an uncooked vegetarian dish that gives high nutritious value. All menus are worth a try. You're guaranteed no disappointments.



The last menu to be recommended when in Samui is the type of “Fine Wine Dine”, meaning a rather luxurious food style either Thai, or modified European, or Mediterranean, depending on chefs' specialty. These foods may be found in luxurious restaurants served in classic atmosphere. Recommended restaurants of this type are “Zazen Restaurant” on Bo Phut Beach, Ban Yan Tree in Tambon Maret and Noraburi Resort & Spa, north of Chaweng Beach.

There are still a lot more to talk about food and restaurants in Samui and it is a charming secret of visiting the island. If we choose to live life in the right way and to eat in the right place, we may find that unforgettably delicious food doesn't need to be expensive, and that sometimes luxurious things in a classic style may deserve you on your travel.



# Pha-ngan: Full-Moon Heaven







## Ao Wok Tum and the Mysterious 100 Years Bending Coconut Trees



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>December to April</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>18.30–19.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Sala, take the beach road on the West up to Wok Tum Beach, about 5 kilometres in distance</i>



The view of bending trees that are parallel with the beach and the tropical sea is the impressive sight for travelers who visit Ao Wok Tum on Ko Pha-ngan. Especially, one coconut tree which bends so low that the trunk almost touches the beach. Some elder local villagers said it has been there for a hundred years and you cannot find this sight anywhere else, but here. The magnificent view of sun sinking itself in the sea matches perfectly with the foreground of bending coconut tree attracts travelers from around the world to have their photos taken with one of the amazing creatures on this planet. Since 1980, when the name of Ko Pha-ngan started to be known among small groups of travelers until today, more than a million visitors have visited this beach and this bending coconut tree, so it would not be exaggerate to say that this coconut tree has more than a million photos of itself all around the world.

## Haad Hin Ngam: the Most Amazing Beautiful Rock Beach on Ko Pha-ngan



*Best Time* December to May

*Best Period* 15.00–16.00 hrs.

*Travel Info* From Thong Sala, use the Thong Sala–Chalok Lam Beach route, a distance of 15 kilometres, then take the left, turn about 2 kilometres ahead there is a makeshift route on the right to Hin Ngam Beach about 500 meters away

When people talk about beaches they normally refer to the white or gold sand beach depends on the geography of that place, however, on Ko Pha-ngan, there is little place with another definition of the beach hidden on the north of the island not very far from Chalok Lam Beach. The beach is full with various sizes of round rocks which is the result from years of monsoon waves and wind crashes the cliff. In the evening, the sunlight hits the beach, the colour of the rocks changes from dark brown to sparkling gold and turn this beach into the truly unforgettable place.







## Separated Sea at Ko Ma : the Inexplicable Most Beautiful Separated in Thai Gulf



*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*January to October*  
*15.00 hrs. to sunset*  
*From Thong Sala, use the Thong Sala-Chalok Lam Beach route, a distance of 15 kilometres, turn left and go about 4 kilometres further to Mae Haad Beach*

Separated sea is when the sea goes down and there is a sand ridge in the middle. The most famous separated sea in Thailand is in between Ko Tup and Ko Mo in Krabi which was introduced to the world as the amazing unseen place in Thailand. On Ko Pha-ngan, there is one separated sea where visitors can walk from Haad Mae Haad to Ko Ma. The cause of the separated sea in Krabi is the nature of the tide and it happens a few days a month while the cause of the separated sea on Ko Pha-ngan is from the influence of the south western wind that blows to the north eastern direction in rainy season. The wind blows and accumulates the sand to form the sand ridge. In the monsoon season the sand ridge will not be seen, apart from that period it can be seen for 10 months in one year and it is one of the symbols of Ko Pha-ngan.



## Than Sadet : the Stream of Beauty and History



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>April to September</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>14.00–16.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Sala, use the Thong Sala–Thong Nai Pan route, about 17 kilometres, and take the right turn to Than Sadet Waterfall, about 3 kilometres ahead</i>

King Chulalongkorn paid his visit to Than Sadet 15 times within 10 consecutive years during 1968 – 1910 where the transportation was not as convenient as today is one big confirmation that Than Sadet waterfall is not just a waterfall where local people from the old time take the fresh water from when they prepared to sail out. The source of Than Sadet is the fresh water stream on Ko Pha-ngan that runs through tropical rain forest and by tiers and become a water fall before ends its journey at Than Sadet bay. There are many history records of King Chulalongkorn's visits for people who are interested to do the research. Than Sadet waterfall is one of many waterfalls that go straight to the opened sea and has its unique exquisiteness where visitors can enjoy themselves in it.



## Khao Ra : the Challenging Highest Viewpoint of Thai Gulf



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>March to May</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>17.00–19.00 hrs. and 07.00–9.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Sala , use the Thong Sala–Ban Maduea Wan route, about 6 kilometres, and on to a secondary road for about 2 kilometres, to the trekking uphill route which takes about 4 hours, camping is recommended.</i>

With the height of 635 metres over the sea level, Khao Ra is the highest mountain on Ko Pha-ngan. The visitors who love adventures will find this place challenging and satisfying. In order to get to the top of the mountain, travelers need to spend 3–4 hours trekking on the incline path through the dense forest, gravity and tiredness will be the main obstruction, but all the way up to the top, the view of tropical rain forest and in the right time of the year, the tallest tiger orchids in the world can be found here as well. Not only the adventures, great nature experience and good exercise that the visitors will get when they reach the top of Khao Ra, but they also earned the right to claim themselves as the conqueror of the highest peak on Ko Pha-ngan







*Best Time* April to October  
*Best Period* 10.00–15.00 hrs.  
*Travel Info* From Thong Sala, use the Thong Sala–Chalok Lam Beach route, a distance of 15 kilometres

Chalok Lam Beach is the attractive crescent-shape beach on the north of Ko Pha-ngan with the crystal clear emerald green ocean contrasts with the pure white sand beach. Chalok Lam is also the place where the fisherman village has located for more than a decade. The activity that becomes popular lately is squid fishing which the squids that the fishermen get will be sold both fresh and dry and they are very famous as the gift from Ko Pha-ngan. It is very pleasant to see the community conserves the old life style no matter how the outside world has changed. People in the village still help each other with kindness. Not only people still remain the way of living, the buildings along the beach road are also reserved the same style by the villagers, even though some houses are turned into restaurants or coffee shops, the fisherman village still remains its vivid charm and impress the visitors as of today.

## Chalok Lam Beach: a Decade of Lively Fisherman Village







## Local Way of Life : Way of Round Clam Pickers of Ko Pha-ngan



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>June to July</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>The low ebb each day</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Sala, use the Thong Sala-Wok Tum Beach route, a distance of 5 kilometres</i>

The beaches on the south of Ko Pha-ngan, especially, Ao Wok Tum and Ao Hin Kong may not be the most popular beaches for sun bathing or swimming as the area is full with mud and mangrove forest, yet, with the condition of this land it is the treasure area for the local people who do coastal fisheries. Shrimp and squid fishing and round clam picking are the main business in this area especially the round clam picking which is old profession that inherits from grandparents to parents and to grandchildren. Round clam pickers will walk on mud into the shallow sea where round clams are, they will drop vegetable oil into the sea till the surface clear enough to see the round clams and pick them. The round clams are sweet and tasty. They are good for many dishes e.g. spicy stir-fried with basil leaves, stir-fried with oyster sauce and coconut milk curry. The round clam picking is one of the cultural local life style and deserves to be reserved.



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>April to October for beaches on the East and the North December to April for beaches on the West and the South</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>10.00–15.00 hrs. and at sunrise and sunset</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Sala to various beaches, all within 20 kilometres, according to the location of each beach</i>

Beaches on Ko Pha-ngan are well-known for their nature and many of them are as beautiful as beaches on the Andaman side, if not even more. The famous beaches are Thong Nai Pan Yai Beach and Thong Nai Pan Noi Beach where the beach is long and the sand is softer and whiter than any beach on this island, while Salad Beach is a curved white sand beach. Ban Tai and Ban Kai are in the south of the island decorated naturally by coconut trees along the beach, with Ko Samui in the background. These beaches have their own unique beauty that attracts visitors and each offers a different experience. So it's not an overstatement to say that beach lovers from around the world like to visit Ko Pha-ngan as the beaches here are a true paradise.

## Pha-ngan Beaches : Nature Lovers' Paradise







## The Most Beautiful after Dark : Haad Yao, Haad Son and Haad Si Thanu



*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*December to May*  
*10.00–15.00 hrs. and at sunrise and sunset*  
*From Thong Sala to various beaches,*  
*all within 20 kilometres, according to the location*  
*of the beach*

While there are also many beautiful beaches on the west of Ko Pha-ngan, there are a few that stand out a bit more than others. Haad Yao is the longest white sand beach located on the west side, the wide beach open to the ocean. Haad Son is quite private and peaceful and has the fantastic view of Ang Thong Islands on the horizon providing fantastic sunsets. Last but not least, Haad Si Thanu is a broad beach with pure white sand. These beaches have their own gorgeousness waiting to be experienced particularly at the twilight; nowhere on this island can be more beautiful than these three places.

## Haad Rin Nok : The World Famous Sleepless Full Moon Party



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>Throughout the year, but the sea is turbulent during November to December, due to the monsoonal season</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>22.00-02.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Thong Sala to Rin Beach, a distance of about 12 kilometres</i>

More than 30 years that the visitors from far away land travel Ko Pha-ngan and spend the unforgettable full moon night on Haad Rin Nok and pass the words around that on the island full with healthy nature, there is one beach which is the dream beach for those free spirit travelers to escape from the chaotic outside world and enjoy the most pure nature that human can find on this planet. Night time, bonfire, music, and the moonlight are the flawless combinations for the perfect night attracting people from everywhere in the world to fill the long beach, turning a small party into a big celebration among teenagers and party lovers. From sunset to sunrise, everyone lets their mind go, drinking and dancing on the beach like there will be no tomorrow. Surrounded by loud music and colourful lighting, but the full moon still shines bright to confirm that this is Haad Rin Nok where the world famous full moon party is and no one can do it better.





# Mu Ko Ang Thong: a Marvelous Archipelago amidst the Gulf of Thailand



## Ko Wua Ta Lap :

### 4 Levels of Viewpoints for More than 4 Dimensions of the View



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year, but May to September is the best period</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>14.00-16.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for a one-hour trip</i>

The viewpoint at Ko Wua Ta Lap, Ang Thong National Marine Park, is well-known for being the most beautiful view points in Thai Gulf. The highest point of Ko Wua Ta Lap is 222 metres above sea levels and from there the travelers will see group of islands in various size and shape line on the emerald ocean especially in the afternoon when the sun shines directly to those islands or another classic view on the days that the sky is decked by the fluffy white clouds. Occasionally, hornbills show themselves to some lucky visitors by flying over the island. The viewpoint has 4 tiers for visitors to stop, rank from the beauty of the view, all 4 tiers get 5 stars as each tier has the exclusive view of its own and several times visitors found themselves walk up and down over and over again for the different satisfying perspective.





## Spectacled Langur and Hornbills : the Wildlife Index of the Nature



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year, with May to September as the best period</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>7.00-8.00 hrs. for the sight of hornbills, 16.00-17.00 hrs. spectacled langurs</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for a one-hour trip</i>

With the area of 102 square metres covers 42 islands and the ocean, the majority of geography is limestone mountains, yet, there are the big part of wonderful dry evergreen forest and beach forest. This forest area is the home for many wild lives including 54 species of birds and 16 species of mammals. In the morning and evening, Spectacled Langurs look for leaves and bark near the national park office at the same time small hornbills can be heard in the big area, sometimes Plain-pouched Hornbills fly over the island in groups. These two animals need the plentiful forest as their habitat to survive therefore they are the wildlife index clearly shows how much the Ang Thong National Marine Park deserves to be conserved for its rich nature.





## Thale Nai : the Unrevealed Mystery



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year, with May to September as the best period</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>8.00-10.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for just over an hour trip</i>

Thale Nai is the must-visit place located in Mae Ko which is one of the 42 islands in the Ang Thong National Marine Park. A salt water lake hidden in the middle of Mae Ko Island is the main reason why it is the not-to-miss place. The lake cannot be seen from the outside, the visitors have to walk up the path and at the top of the path is where the emerald green lays itself among the trees and waits to be found. Thale Nai provides the cheerful and energetic atmosphere when it is full with tourist, but if some arrive before others, the atmosphere is total different to the point that people can get their doubts whether it is the same place. From the bird eye view, the view of Thale Nai looks just like the enormous dinosaur foot print or some might call it as the only Jurassic Park Lake in the middle of the sea in Thailand.





<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year, with May to September as the best period</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>13.00-16.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for just over an hour trip</i>

Natural sculptures can be found everywhere and many places are hard to believe that it can really happen. The foundation of the islands in the Ang Thong National Marine Park is limestone mountains. These mountains often have naturally beautiful caves or stunning sculptures which some are the results from the rain shaping the stone years over years into the spear shape or some happen because of the monsoon waves hit the stone for thousand years and creates the hollow in it and this type of natural sculpture can be found at Ko Sam Sao, one of the big islands in the Ang Thong National Marine Park. The stone bridge, from the beach at the low tide, has the big enough hollow that kayaks can go through which looks like the big stone bridge, this sculpture is the perfect combinations of water, stone, thousand years time and nature.

## Ko Sam Sao Stone Bridge : the Perfect Combinations of Water and Stone



## Sunrise at Ko Wua Ta Lap : Ang Thong National Marine Park



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year, with May to September as the best period</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>6.00-7.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for a one-hour trip</i>

Ko Wua Ta Lap is one of the big islands in the Ang Thong National Marine Park. Every morning, in front of the National Park Office, the early bird visitors will find the best sunrise view with the coconut line foreground. The sky colour shades as if an unknown artist painted it and when the big round sun gets higher, it is the sign that the new day has started and lives will start their circle again. If one has not experienced such the beauty of nature, maybe it is the good time to visit Ko Wua Ta Lap and who knows, the morning sunrise here might give provide one of the most beautiful morning to their life.







<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year, with May to September as the best period</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>10.00-15.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for a one-hour trip</i>

Ko Phaluai is isolate from other island in the Ang Thong National Marine Park and only half of the island, the north part, is included in the national park area. Most of beaches on Ko Phaluai are mud and rock therefore it is not popular among the travelers, yet, there is one beach on the northeast part of the island that has white sand beach and its beauty is not any less than any other stunning beaches in the Ang Thong National Marine Park. Song Phi Nong is the name of that beach. Apart from the soft white sand beach and crystal clear sea, a mysterious stone erects right in the middle of the sea is the symbol of this beach and makes it unique. The shape of the stone looks like Ko Tapu in Phang-nga or well-known as James Bond island, with the similar shape, many people call this stone in the sea as James Bond Island as well. However, someone with the high imagination said that this stone looks like a man head with the long nose just like a witch or Pinocchio.

## Ko Phaluai, Song Phi Nong Beach and Stone Sculpture in the Middle of the Sea



# Ko Tao and Ko Nang Yuan: the Natural Charm and the Underwater World







*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*December to May*  
*10.00–15.00 hrs.*

*From Bang Rak Pier, take the speedboat for about 2 hours to Ko Tao. On Ko Tao, ride a motorcycle taxi for about 15 minutes to Freedom Beach, and trek for 20 minutes to the Viewpoint*

Of all viewpoints on Ko Tao, John Suwan Viewpoint is the most renowned for the unique and superb landscape it commands, from the point reached by foot in less than 20 minutes from Freedom Beach at the tip of Chalok Ban Kao Beach, you'd find yourself at a vantage point where the two bays curve into each other in harmony, similar to the two-bay view at Ton Sai Bay Viewpoint on Phi Phi Don Island in Krabi, with Chalok Ban Kao Bay on the right and Thian Ok Bay to the right. It was told that two hikers, John and Suwan discovered the place and named it John Suwan Viewpoint. No one then reckoned that it was the finest and the only two-bay viewpoint on the Gulf of Thailand.

*John Suwan Viewpoint:  
Ultimate Beauty at the Only  
Viewpoint Commanding Two Bays  
in the Gulf of Thailand*

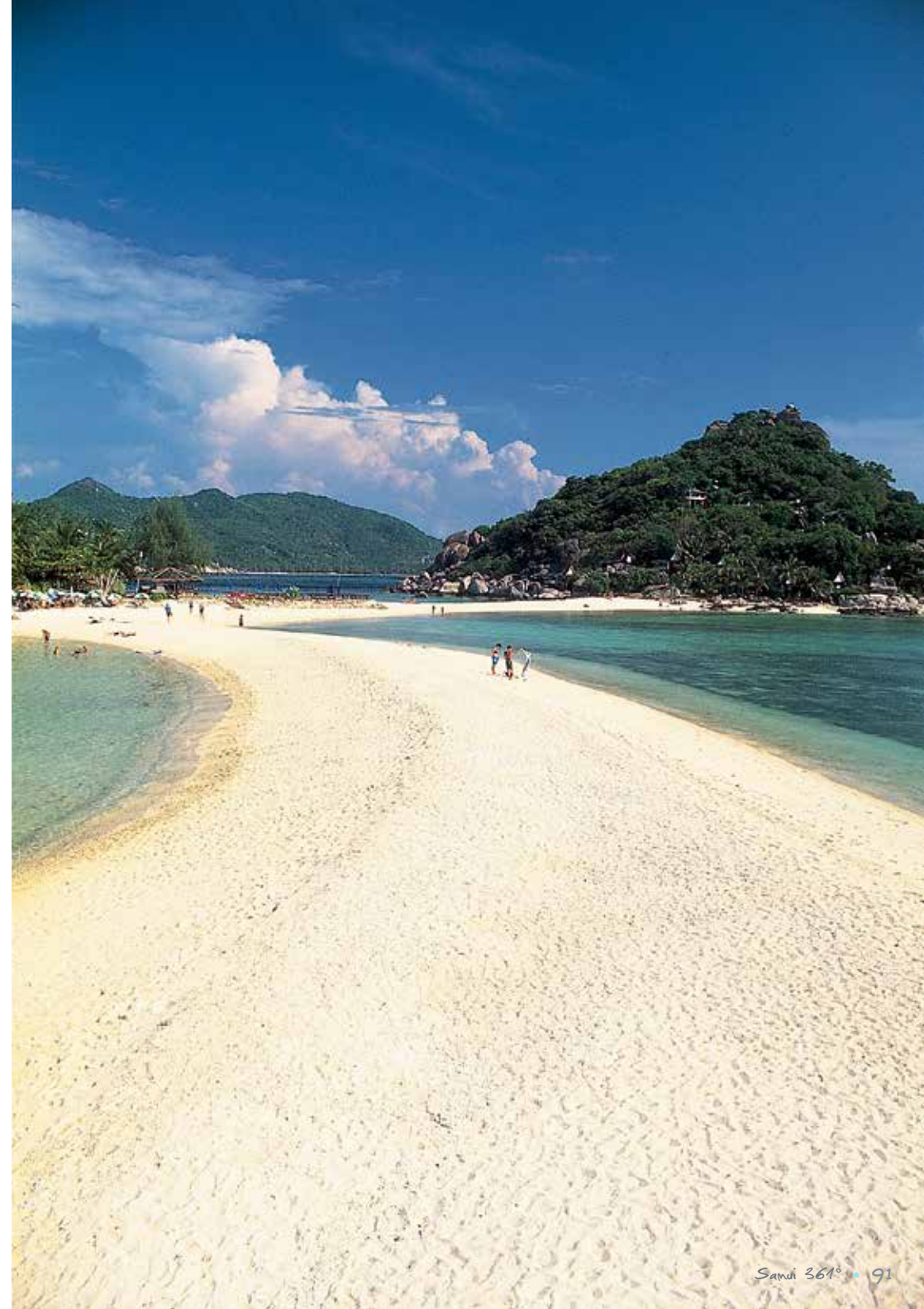


## Ko Nang Yuan Viewpoint: Immortal Beauty that Lingers in the Memory Forever



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>April to September</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>10.00–15.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>Package tours are offered in Samui at Bang Rak Pier, as a convenient one day tour.</i>

When searching for the most classic and beautiful view of a sand dune in the middle of the sea within the Gulf of Thailand, the landscape of Ko Nang Yuan is certainly one of the viewpoints renowned for the beauty that rivals any places in the world. Climbing to the highest point and looking down, one takes in the view of pure white sand dunes linked up in a well-defined line between the main island and two islets surrounded by azure clear water. The sand dunes in the area vary each year as influenced by the waves and wind. Moreover, the area around Ko Nang Yuan is also a popular site for shallow water corals viewing that welcome snorkelers from around the world every year. They always visit Ko Nang Yuan and record impressive views at this famous viewpoint, making it an immortal beauty that lingers in travelers' memories forever.





## Shark Point and Chumphon Rock : Ultimate Dive Sites at Ko Tao



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>April to September</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>9.00-15.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Ko Tao, a diving package tour can be bought from diving shops especially on Mae Haad and Sai Ri Beaches</i>

The blue underwater world is another dimension of tourism that attracts visitors from all over who fall in love with the pure natural beauty that brings them back again and again. The seacoast of the Gulf of Thailand offers several significant dive sites such as at Chumphon Islands, Chumphon Province, and Ko Tao, Surat Thani Province, with their unique features different from the coral reefs on the Andaman Sea. Often found are red sea fans, and yellow black corals, including large fishes such as whale shark, Bruda whale and giant grouper. There exist in some places rocks which serve as habitat of colorful clownfish and beautiful sea anemones, making the area around Ko Tao the most important dive sites for scuba divers and snorkelers along the Gulf of Thailand coast, with highlights at Shark Point and Chumphon Rock, the habitat of colourful clownfish, Nemo. The spectacular underwater world is awaiting at Ko Tao, divers' paradise in the Gulf of Thailand!





<i>Best Time</i>	<i>April to October for beaches on the East and the North December to April for beaches on the West and the South</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>10.00-15.00 hrs. and at sunrise and sunset</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Mae Haad to various beaches, all within 10 kilometres, according to the location of the beach</i>

Ko Tao might not be a major island with numerous beaches like Ko Samui or Ko Pha-ngan, and most island area is mountainous but that has made up another charm of Ko Tao, with boulders and rocks as general features of the island. Main beaches for tourists are Mae Haad and Sai Ri Beaches now well-known among visitors. Yet, there are numerous small beaches at various bays that lie hidden on the island, which are peaceful and private, a completely different atmosphere from large beaches aimed by most tourists. They are such as beaches at Chan Som, Luek, Tanot, Hin Wong and Mae Wong Bays, for instance. These small bays exist on the eastern side of the island and the season to visit them should be picked to avoid the Trade Wind Season from November to January, when strong wind and turbulent waves make swimming impossible. The period from May to September is ideal for the area when you can find the tiny bays peaceful and hospitable, as your private paradise away from the world of reality.

## Ko Tao: Time and Season for a Happy Beach Visit





## The Miracle Buddha Rock at the Tip of Dato Point



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>December to May</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>9.00–15.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Laek Ban Kao Bay, a boat can be hired to view the Buddha Rock, taking no more than one hour</i>

Ko Tao is a rocky island, with only a small flat land along some beaches. With such geological feature, the beaches around Ko Tao are mostly accentuated by boulders and rocks. They are mostly on the eastern side of the island. The southernmost tip of the island is Dato Point jutting into the sea, lined with oddly-shaped rocks that make up the backbone of the island, similar to the Sailboat Rock of Similan Islands. At the tip of the point there are peculiar boulders which also mark an important dive site to the South of the Ko Tao. However, a miraculous item lies hidden at the tip of the Point, namely, the Buddha Rock a large stone slab at the tip of Dato Point, shaped as a standing Buddha. It has thus been called the Buddha Rock. Rock sculptures which are the work of natural forces still inspire viewers as long as humans are filled with imaginative power.



# Kao Sok: the Emerald of the Forest upon the Spectacular Lake



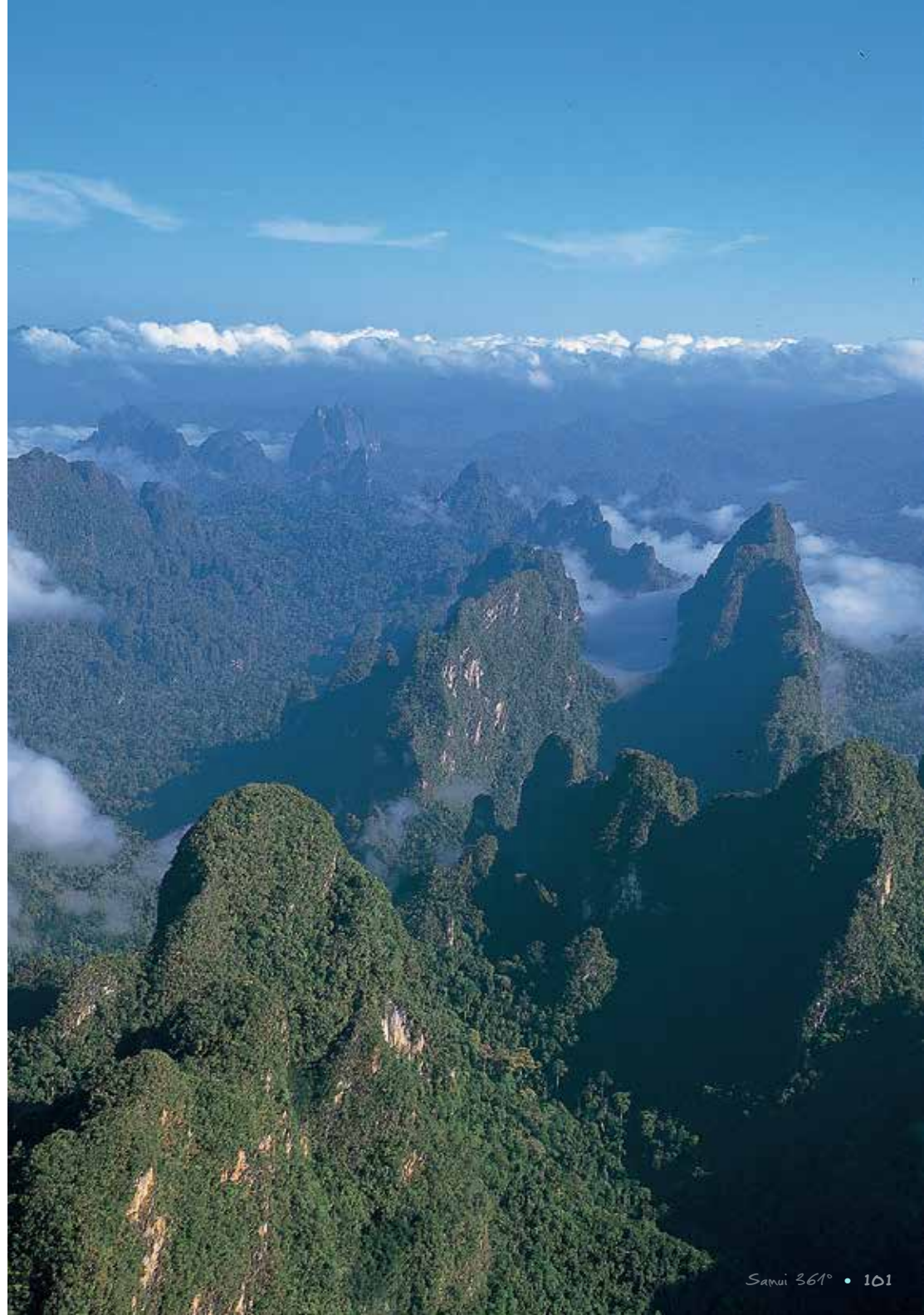


## Guilin of Thailand: the Unfading Fascination of Chiao Lan Lake



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>December to May</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>7.00–9.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From Ratchaprapha Dam Pier, boat can be chartered to take to various points</i>

Since the year 2006 when Thailand invented the Unseen Thailand campaign, the Khao Sok National Park which is resplendent with creases of lofty limestone mountains alongside the expanse of water of Chiao Lan Dam has been dubbed “Guilin of Thailand” with similar landscape with Guilin, the World Heritage site in China. And the sight that remains in the people’s memories for a long time has been an aerial view showing the lofty crests covered by early morning mist, making up a dreamlike image or a work by a world-renowned sculptor. Today, as we cruise into Chiao Lan Dam Lake, apart from the clear aquamarine water around us, lofty limestone mountains in the morning mist remain a feast for imagination, with fantastic rock formations everywhere, some tucked away in the large expanse of water, silently waiting to be discovered. You can always claim a new finding any time, even a famous one like the Three Stooges in a new light. As long as travelers seek to immerse in pure nature, Guilin of Thailand remains foremost with its unfading fascination.







## Khao Sok: Endemic Plant Kingdom, Miracle Thai Plant Diversity



*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*December to May*  
*7.00–10.00 hrs.*

*From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No. 401 to kilometer 109. Take the right turn and get further for about 1.5 kilometres to reach the Park.*



The Khao Sok forest area of 739 square kilometres is of great importance for the southern region, as about 70% is moist evergreen forest, interspersed by limestone forest, making it even richer in biodiversity, with flora and fauna that are mostly endemic. Famous is Bua Phut, *Rafflesia kerri* Majer, the world's largest flower, which lies hidden as a bud for about 9 months, and comes into bloom for 7 days only. It is therefore a flower of good luck for anyone who encounters it. Another rare plant species is a specific palm, *Kerriodoxa elegans*, with the young leaf green in the front and white-grey in the back, found only here at Khao Sok and Khao Phra Thaeo in Phuket. Also found here are *Licuala distans* Ridl., a palm with each leaf split open into exactly 40 rays, and *Maxburretia fuertadoana* with its habitat on a steep limestone cliff only. All these make Khao Sok a wondrous endemic plant kingdom of Thailand.





*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*December to May*  
*7.00–10.00 hrs.*  
*From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No. 401 to kilometer 109. Take the right turn and get about 1.5 kilometres further to reach the Park*

The Khao Sok moist evergreen forest covers a vast area, up to Khlong Saeng Wildlife Reserve Area, Khlong Nakha Wildlife Reserve Area, and Si Phang-nga National Park, and makes up the largest moist evergreen forest in the South of Thailand. Apart from its extremely rich biodiversity, the area is also an important watershed that originates several major streams, as the source of life for a large number of people. Of great significance are Khlong Sok and Khlong Phasaeng, the head water of Phum Duang River, a major tributary of Tapi River. Khao Sok forest also originates several beautiful waterfalls, suitable for an adventure trekking. They are such as the 11-tier Waterfall, Bang Hua Raet Waterfall, Wing Hin Waterfall, Ton Kloi Waterfall, and Than Sawan Waterfall. You can also trek through various waterfalls to Tang Nam a stone cliff through which Khlong Sok flows. This is the site where the ashes of the revered Buddhadasa Bhikkhu were floated.

*Khao Sok : moist evergreen forest,  
the source of life,  
the gem of a forest*





*Tham Pla, Tham Kaeo:  
the Ascination of Khlong Phanom  
Limestone Mountain*



<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>9.00 – 16.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No. 401 to kilometer 92. Tham Pla and Tham Kaeo are on the left.</i>

The forestland in Khlong Phanom National Park covers up to 460 square kilometres in area, with 80% as limestone mountains, interspersed by 20% flat land in the valleys. As such, there are a number of beautiful caves, those in easy access to the remote ones requiring arduous trekking. Tham Pla – Fish Cave and Tham Kaeo – Gem Cave are located at the rim of the park, next to Highway No.401. They can be reached quite easily. Tham Pla is a shallow opening in the rocks through which one can walk to the other side easily. At the other end is the current of Khlong Sok which flows past the inside cave opening. Sholes of red-fin barbs, locally known as Lampam barbs make up a spectacle here. Tourists always stop to feed the barbs. To get to Tham Kaeo, a one-hour trekking along Khlong Sok is required, with some difficulties on the route. The cave is resplendent with stalagmite and stalactite, forming glittering chambers as Klet Kaeo, Hermit's, Seahorse and Drug Pot, for instance, as fascination of Khlong Phanom limestone mountains worth discovering.





<i>Best Time</i>	<i>December to May</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>7.00–10.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No. 401 to kilometer 90, The left turn takes to the park office, about 200 meters ahead</i>

Khlong Phanom forest has its unique prominent geological features, flora and fauna, as limestone mountains interspersed by forested flat lands. A short nature study route of about 2 kilometres in the park is thus a model of Khlong Phanom forest as a whole for tourists to learn and understand natural features, with prominent points not to be missed as viewpoints at two levels, offering views of the beautiful limestone mountain valleys, especially mystic in the morning mist. The route then takes you gradually spiraling upwards. Along the way, one can look up the cliffs which are the habitat of Khlong Phanom vines, an endemic plant with delightful flowers. Deep inside is the giant Mesawa tree, measuring 12 metres in diameter, a true highlight on the route. If luck is on your side, *Rafflesia kerri* Meijer, the largest flower without stem can also be encountered as well. If you have the green heart, Khlong Phanom forest is certainly foremost as the site that combines people's hearts with the forest in perfect harmony.

## Green Heart : Touring as Conservationists in Khlong Phanom Forest





*Best Time*                      *December to May*  
*Best Period*                    *7.00–11.00 hrs.*  
*Travel Info*                    *Significant rafting points are at kilometer 100–95*  
    *and at kilometer 90–85 on Highway No. 401*

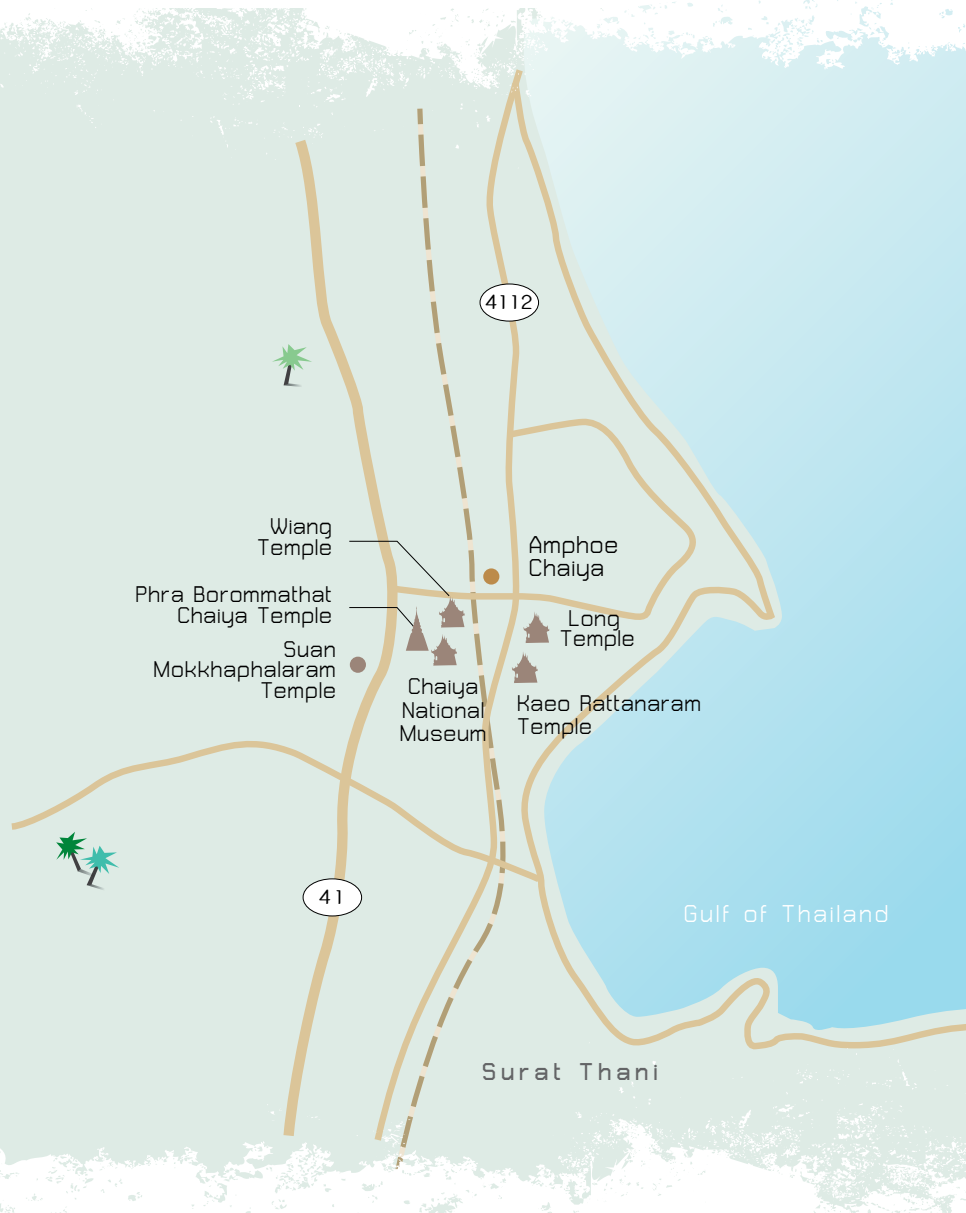
The most evergreen forest is teemed with life, both flora and fauna that coexist for centuries, as a great nature study classroom that everyone dream of visiting, especially visitors from another side of the globe where no evergreen forests can be found. Activities are therefore designed for the access to biodiversity in Khao Sok forest, for you to choose to be in close contact with the evergreen forest, such as white water rafting with inflatable boats or kayaking which offers enjoyment and a close touch with natural surroundings. Riding on elephant's neck through the jungle is also an interesting activity for an experience of a lifetime. All these dream activities can only be maintained if we conserve the dwindling forestland for sustainability, so that dreams of visitors from afar can be fulfilled.

## Dream Activities for Travelers from Across the World to Visit the Emerald Khao Sok Forest





## Chaiya: the Religious Road to Eternal Tranquility







*Suan Mokkh : the Garden of  
Dhamma on the stone arch*

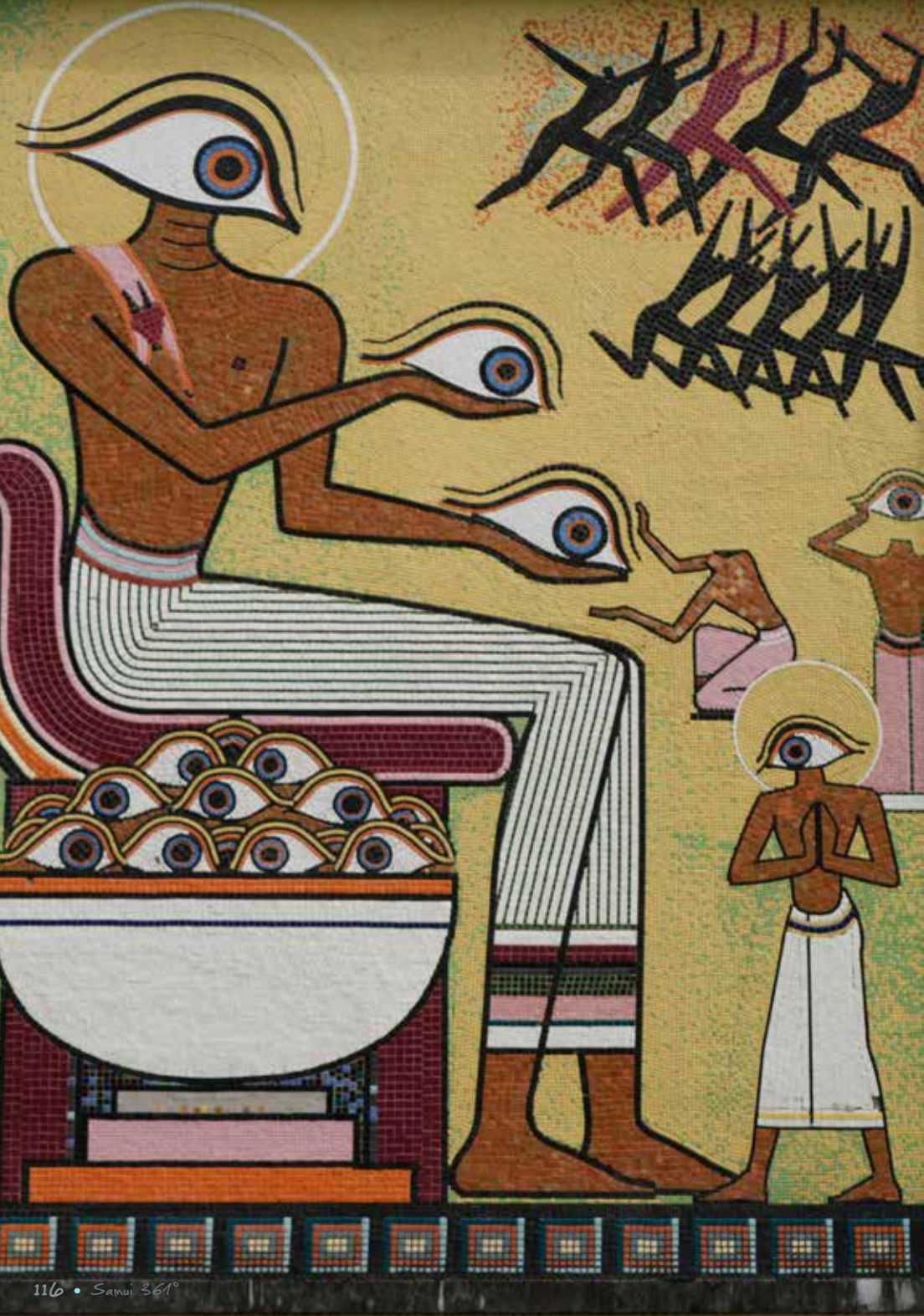


<i>Best Time</i>	<i>All through the year</i>
<i>Best Period</i>	<i>8.00–17.00 hrs.</i>
<i>Travel Info</i>	<i>From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No.41 to Suan Mokkhaphalaram at 134th kilometer mark before reaching the intersection leading into Amphoe Chaiya</i>



Suan Mokkhaphalaram is the Garden of Dhamma founded by the Venerable Buddhadasa on the full moon day of the sixth lunar month of the year 1932 or 81 years ago. The area was originally a deserted temple called Wat Traphang Chik, left in a deep jungle on the slope of Buddha Thong Hill, at km.134 mark, Amphoe Chaiya, Surat Thani Province. The temple is officially named Wat Than Nam Lai, while the name Suan Mokkhaphalaram means the forest garden as the power of liberation from sufferings. Dhamma principle always observed by Bhuddhadasa Bhikkhu has been “livie lowly(modestly), act highly (nobly)” which indicates his humbleness, with determination to propagate the Lord Buddha’s Dhamma to all sentient beings for their journey towards liberation from sufferings according to each individual’s wisdom. Today, Suan Mokkh is a center of Dhamma practice well known to both Thais and foreigners with a large number of interested practitioners coming in regularly. The stone arch is the Dhamma practice space in lush natural surroundings, for the chanting of prayers, sermons, and meditation or mind training. Every Saturday from January to the Commencement of the Buddhist Lent, there is a demonstration of alms presentation at the stone arch. Most importantly, the natural prayer hall on Buddha Thong Hill is an example of an existence in harmony with nature, with large trees as walls and roof. This can only be found at Suan Mokkhaphalaram.





*The Spiritual Theatre : as the centre  
or archive of Dhamma riddles,  
riddles of liberation*



*Best Time  
Best Period  
Travel Info*

*All through the year  
8.00–17.00 hrs.*

*From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No. 41 to  
Suan Mokkhaphalaram at 134th kilometer mark before  
reaching the intersection leading into Amphoe Chaiya*

Within the area of Suan Mokkhaphalaram, apart from the stone arch and the prayer hall of Buddha Thong Hill, another important structure is the Spiritual Theater intended as the Dhamma learning center for visitors through visual presentations of Dhamma riddles as reminders for humans to use their wisdom to bring themselves towards liberation, or nibbana. There are hundreds of such paintings. The important ones are on the outside, as “Handing out the eyes of Dhamma” showing how most people try to flee, refusing to accept the eyes of Dhamma. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu aim to teach people to be aware and realize that they should accept the eyes of Dhamma for liberation. Anyone who accept the eyes of Dhamma can step into the spiritual theatre, with paintings depicting Dhamma riddles that can induce viewers to liberation. The secret of solving Dhamma riddles is said to be based on 3 principles, namely, figuring out the painting, considering for understanding, and taking in the Dhamma to purify the mind. Thus, the visit to the spiritual theater can be the most meaningful for the liberation from sufferings in real life.





## Archeology of the City of Chaiya : the value of stories of the golden days in the past



*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*All through the year*  
*8.00–17.00 hrs.*  
*From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No.41*  
*up to the intersection leading into Amphoe Chaiya.*  
*Turn right into Highway No. 4011 and get further*  
*by 2–3 kilometres.*

The City of Chaiya was once a prosperous city founded around the 12th Century B.E. as the capital in the Srivijaya Empire, serving as an administrative center and center of foreign trade. It reached the zenith of progress and prosperity as the center of the propagation of Buddhism before disintegrating in the 17th Century B.E. The stories of the golden age of Chaiya are available for study and experience at the National Museum of Chaiya, with valuable artifacts, religious objects in Buddhism as well as other fine works of art and handicrafts, including the pagoda of Wat Kaeo, Wat Long and the Folk Museum of Wat Wiang. Above all, the Pagoda of the Holy Relic of Chaiya aged 1200 years, has been the focus of strong faiths in Buddhism through centuries.



# Surat Thani: the Song of Life on a Hundred Canals







*Best Time* All through the year  
*Best Period* 17.00–20.00 hrs.  
*Travel Info* From the city of Surat Thani, board a boat at  
 Pla Wan (Whale) Pier, opposite to the  
 Ko Lamphu or Firefly Island Public Park

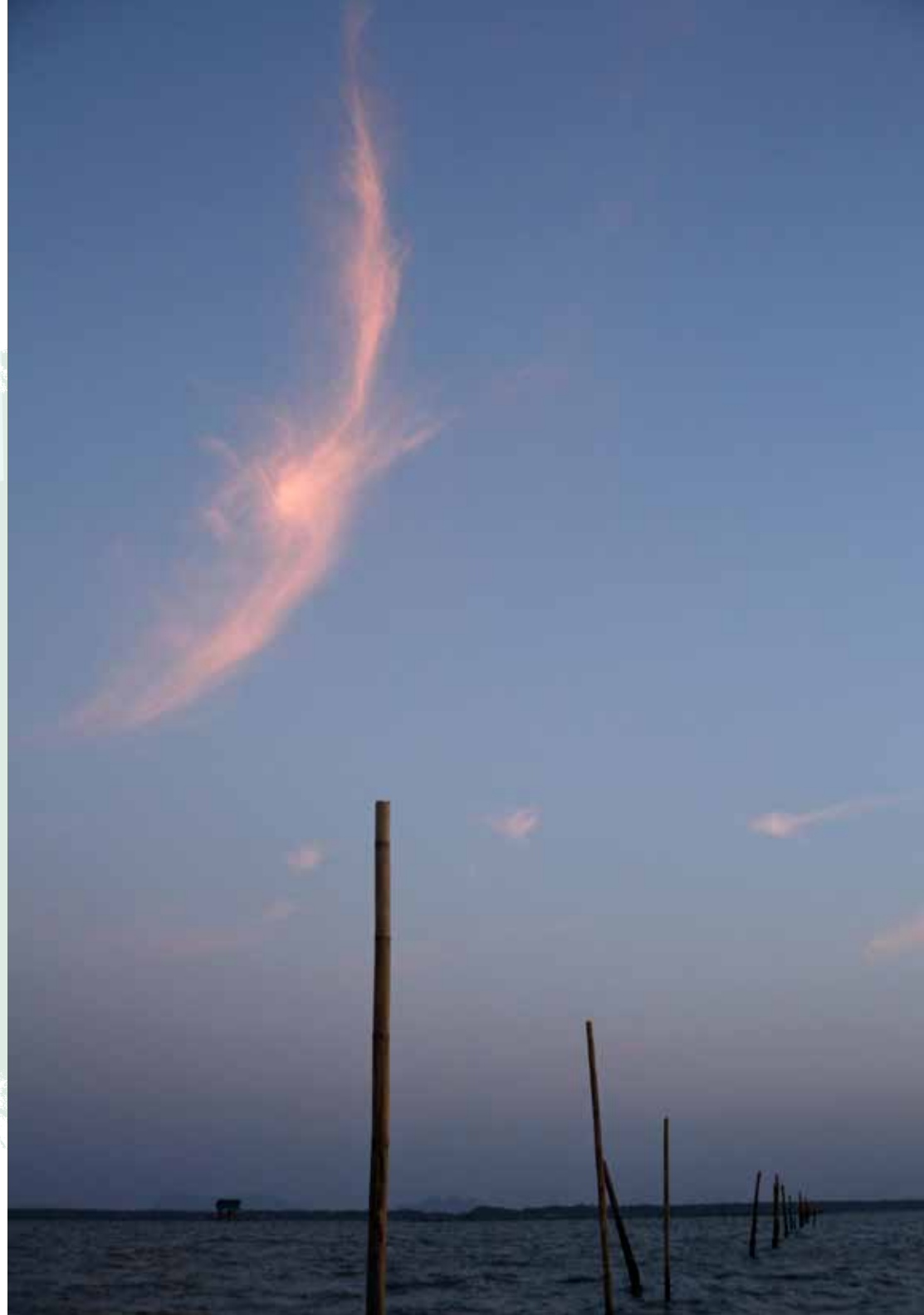
For a long time, Surat Thani people on the opposite site of the town district have led a traditional and economically sustainable way of life, planting fruits along and commuting on waterways of approximately 100 canals and rivers. Up until today, even if roads that were cut right across the community and more convenient means of transportation have altered people's lifestyles, there are many who still hold on to their traditional customs. Canal transportation today has become a part of eco-tourism that attracts visitors to come experience the way of living by water. A kilometre-long nipa palm-roofed tunnel and countless fireflies on mangrove apple trees at night spell the charm to the unique life along the weaving canal routes.

## A Hundred Canals : Enchanting Lifestyle that Transcends the Time





Kanchanadit:  
Beautiful Way of Life on the  
Coast of Giant Seashells Town





## Kanchanadit: Oyster Farmers' Lifestyle in the Middle of the Sea



*Best Time*  
*Best Period*  
*Travel Info*

*All through the year*  
*6.00–7.00 hrs. and 17.00–18.00 hrs.*  
*From the city of Surat Thani, follow Highway No. 401 to Amphoe Kanchanadit and turn left into Highway No. 4177 which leads to Pak Nam Tha Thong. Here, take a boat for another 20 minutes.*

The vast shallow waterscape of Tha Thong River's delta is considered to be an important economic precinct of Surat Thani province. Located across the area are farms for oysters and mussels of whose sizes are known to be largest in the region and have become the slogan of the province. Pictures of Kanum or temporary cottages in the middle of the sea with poles for seashells to grow on have become a selling point that makes visitors decide to travel to Kanchanadit to see the farming. "Farmstay", where you can get a glimpse of genuine local lives and fully enjoy sunrise, sunset and zillions of stars, is a unique experience of Thailand that you should not miss.



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Published by	The Provincial Administrative Organization of Surattani Office
Printing	Best Graphic Press Ltd., Part
	1,000 copies
	March 2014
	All Rights Reserved



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